

Sweetwater, Berlin

Luzie Meyer

Duplicitous consent

November 2 – December 14, 2019

Hi Luzie! I'm sorry, I've so far only read the first 50 pages of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, approximately ¼ of my copy of the book. The monster hasn't even been born. I've arrived at the part where Dr. Frankenstein is describing his childhood, how he, the scientist, was formed. He thinks if we know his past, we'll understand his endeavours, his errors, his shame.

But it isn't my fault. I've been busy. I've been teaching too much, and it's exhausting. There are rules, including where my face appears in the frame, the resolution of my image, the kind of shirt I wear, the cadence of my speech, what of my personal effects are visible behind me, the facial expressions I make. There is a formula: 25-28 minutes per class, and the greeting should take 3 minutes. "Hi friends! Welcome! What's your name? Are you happy? I'm happy you're happy. Thank you!" I think the repetition is changing me, and I'm afraid. I find myself giving two thumbs up all the time now, in casual conversation with a friend, to someone I want to impress, store clerks, a gynecologist. I catch myself using the word "excited" to describe how I feel. I teach at least 3 words per class. Today, one of the words was "real." The opposite of real was "candy." The example I was made to give was a fish.

The other night I had a panic, and cried for 3 minutes as I greeted inescapable darkness. I couldn't help it. A close friend had died some days before. He was a kind of father figure to me, and a doctor. He once touched the bottom of my foot to examine a rash I had made by scratching at it. He introduced me to a kind of masculinity to which I could connect without sex or duty. When I got panicked, it was at the total nonexistence of a soul, offered to the void in exchange for what?

I could use this grief as an excuse to make a monster. My monster would be small and nasty, and she would take pleasure in being mean. She would smoke cigarettes one after another, coveting always her portion of the bottle of wine, pouring herself larger glasses than she pours even for her closest friends. She would think that people are against her, assuming they want to catch her not doing her job, assuming they laugh behind her back at her ugliness and at her sincere endeavour to be liked. She would notice first the ugliness of people, especially women. She would be covered in sores from taking pleasure in scratching away skin to feel the sting of her own existence. Her fingers would leave streaks of blood on other people's things, which she would notice, but never admit. She would never read, she would smile constantly, and she would spend all her money on clothes. She would bury her resentments and inadequacies until, in livid tempers which are her greatest pleasure, she explodes.

Instead, I am wrenching myself away from reactivity by replacing one pattern of thought with another. Sorry, I know it resembles repression, this cutting myself into portions and serving some out judiciously, but it's working, and I'm tempted to do it now:

Replace every but with and.

Replace every sorry with thank you.

The only thing I can control is myself.

I joyfully choose how I spend my time.

I accept responsibility.

Thank you!

And I was made to exchange chimeras of boundless grandeur for realities of little worth.

– Rosa Aiello

Luzie Meyer (*1990, Tübingen, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. Recent film screenings and solo exhibitions include Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig, Germany; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne; Éclair, Berlin; and Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, Germany. Her works have also been exhibited or performed at Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg, Germany; CACBM, Paris; Prosjektrom Normanns, Stavanger, Norway; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Portikus, Frankfurt; and were included in the 2016 Montreal Biennial of Contemporary Art. Meyer studied at the Städelschule, Frankfurt with Judith Hopf and was a 2018-19 resident at Cité Internationale des Artes, Paris.

We would like to thank the following, without whom this exhibition would not be possible: Rosa Aiello, Beth Collar, Jack Heard, Laura Langer, Jonathan Penca, Laura Ziegler, and the Hessische Kulturstiftung.

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